

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An image combining and outputting apparatus that combines a plurality of original images and outputs a combined image, comprising:
 - a balance adjusting unit for adjusting balance between a plurality of original images that are to be combined; and
 - an image combining unit for combining the plurality of original images after the balance has been adjusted by the balance adjusting unit,
 - the balance adjusting unit including:
 - an attribute information obtaining unit for obtaining attribute information that has been added to image data of a fixed image, the fixed image being an original image, out of the plurality of original images, whose size is not to be adjusted by the balance adjusting unit;
 - a size information obtaining unit for obtaining size information showing an original size of at least one adjustable image, an adjustable image being an original image in the plurality of original images whose size is to be adjusted by the balance adjusting unit; and
 - a size adjusting unit for adjusting the size of at least one adjustable image, based on the attribute information obtained by the attribute information obtaining unit and the size information obtained by the size information obtaining unit;

wherein the attribute information includes a post-adjustment size to be used for the adjustable images, and the size adjusting unit makes the sizes of the at least one adjustable image approximately equal to the post-adjustment size shown by the attribute information.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) An image combining and outputting apparatus according to Claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, further comprising
a selection input receiving unit for receiving a user selection of an image combining parameter that is assigned in advance to each adjustable image,

wherein the attribute information includes a plurality of pairs, each pair showing one setting of the image combining-parameter and a corresponding post-adjustment size, and the size adjusting unit makes the sizes of the at least one adjustable image approximately equal to the post-adjustment size corresponding to the selected image combining parameter selected by the user for each adjustable image.

4. (Original) An image combining and outputting apparatus according to Claim 3,

wherein the attribute information includes at least one arrangement position at which an original image is to be positioned during image combining, each arrangement position being associated with a different setting of the image combining parameter.

5. (Currently Amended) An image combining and outputting apparatus according to Claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1,

wherein the attribute information includes information showing an arrangement position into which an original image is to be positioned during image combining.

6. (Currently Amended) An image combining and outputting apparatus according to ~~Claim 1, further comprising:~~ that combines a plurality of original images and outputs a combined image, comprising:

a balance adjusting unit for adjusting balance between a plurality of original images that are to be combined; and

an image combining unit for combining the plurality of original images after the balance has been adjusted by the balance adjusting unit.

the balance adjusting unit including:

an attribute information obtaining unit for obtaining attribute information that has been added to image data of a fixed image, the fixed image being an original image, out of the plurality of original images, whose size is not to be adjusted by the balance adjusting unit;

a size information obtaining unit for obtaining size information showing an original size of at least one adjustable image, an adjustable image being an original image in the plurality of original images whose size is to be adjusted by the balance adjusting unit;

a size adjusting unit for adjusting the size of at least one adjustable image, based on the attribute information obtained by the attribute information obtaining unit and the size information obtained by the size information obtaining unit;

an amendment indication input receiving unit which receives an indication showing that at least one of a size and a position of at least one original image are to be amended within a combined image;

wherein when the amendment indication input receiving unit has received an indication showing that a size of at least one original image is to be adjusted, the balance adjusting unit adjusts the sizes of the at least one original image in accordance with the indication, and

when the amendment indication input receiving unit has received an indication showing that a position of at least one original image is to be adjusted, the image combining unit adjusts the positions of the at least one original image in accordance with the indication.

7. (Original) An image combining and outputting apparatus according to Claim 1,

wherein the plurality of original images to be combined consist of a background image whose size is not to be adjusted and an input image whose size is changed as necessary in accordance with the background image.

8. (Currently Amended) An image combining and outputting apparatus, comprising:

an image combining means for combining a first image and a second image;

an attribute information obtaining means for obtaining attribute information that is appended to the first image;

a size information obtaining unit for obtaining size information that is appended to the second image; and

a size adjusting means for adjusting the size of the second image based on the attribute information and the size information when the image combining means performs image combining;

wherein the attribute information includes second size information showing a post-adjustment size for the second image;

the size adjusting means magnifying or reducing the second image to make the size of the second image approximately equal to the post-adjustment size shown by the second size information.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) An image combining and outputting apparatus according to Claim ~~[[9]]~~ 8, further comprising

an operation unit for indicating an image type of the second image,

the second size information being changed in accordance with the image type of the second image indicated by the operation unit.

11. (Original) An image combining and outputting apparatus according to Claim 8,

wherein the attribute information includes position information showing a position for arranging the second image during the image combining,

the image combining means arranging the second image at the position shown by the second size information when combining the first image and the second image.

12. (Original) An image combining and outputting apparatus according to Claim 8, further comprising:

a mode setting means for setting a user mode where the size of the second image is changed according to a user operation; and

a changing means for stopping, when the user mode has been set, the size adjusting means from adjusting the size of the second image and for changing the size of the second image in accordance with the user operation.

13. (Original) An image combining and outputting apparatus according to Claim 8, further comprising:

an outline extracting means for extracting an outline in the second image; and

a display device for displaying the outline extracted from the second image together with the first image.

14. (Currently Amended) An image combining method for combining a first image and a second image, comprising:

an attribute information obtaining step for obtaining attribute information that is appended to the first image:

a size information obtaining step for obtaining size information that is appended to the second image;

a size adjusting step for adjusting the size of the second image based on the attribute information and the size information; and

an image combining step for combining the first image with the second image whose size has been automatically adjusted in the size adjusting step;

wherein the attribute information includes second size information showing a post-adjustment size for the second image;

the size adjusting step magnifying or reducing the second image to make the size of the second image approximately equal to the post-adjustment size shown by the second size information.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Newly Presented) An image processing apparatus comprising:

an image processor for combining a first image and a second image;

an attribute information obtaining unit for obtaining attribute information that is appended to the first image, the attribute information including suitable size information for the second image to be combined with the first image;

a size information obtaining unit for obtaining original size information showing an original size of the second image; and

a size adjusting unit for adjusting a size of the second image based on the suitable size information and the original size information.

17. (Newly Presented) A method of image processing, the method comprising:

combining a first image and a second image;

obtaining attribute information that is appended to the first image, the attribute information including suitable size information for the second image to be combined with the first image;

obtaining original size information showing an original size of the second image;

and

adjusting a size of the second image based on the suitable size information and the original size information.